

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**KENTUCKY GOVERNOR PAUL PATTON TO SUCCEED WEST VIRGINIA
GOVERNOR CECIL UNDERWOOD AS CHAIR OF
NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL**

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) On Saturday, February 20, Governor Paul E. Patton of Kentucky will be named the new Chair of the National Education Goals Panel, a bipartisan body of federal and state officials created in July 1990 to assess state and national progress toward achieving the National Education Goals. Governor Patton will succeed current NEGP Chair and West Virginia Governor Cecil Underwood. An NEGP member, Governor Patton was elected by fellow Panel members.

Governor Patton's background in education issues is extensive. In 1997 he established the Postsecondary Education Improvement Act, which elevated Kentucky's community and technical schools to independent and cooperative entities under one governing board with increased funding. He was also instrumental in the Research Challenge Trust Fund Endowment Program, which has brought extensive support to research efforts by the University of Lexington and the University of Kentucky. Other accomplishments made by Governor Patton include:

- The establishment of merit scholarships funded by state lottery proceeds so that students can earn money toward a postsecondary education degree throughout their four years of high school;
- The full funding of needs-based scholarships for the first time in Kentucky history, with an additional \$29 million appropriation over FY 99-2000, which will allow an additional 12,000 students to receive financial aid this year;
- The state's investment of \$621 million in school technology in elementary and secondary schools, designed to make Kentucky's schools the most technologically advanced when the program is completed in July, 2000; and,
- The creation of the Office of Early Childhood Development, to develop a comprehensive plan to address the needs of Kentucky's children in the most important early formative years.

(more)

New Chair for Goals Panel

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Under Governor Underwood's leadership, the NEGP has vastly enhanced its role as a resource on promising practices for boosting student achievement, and for reporting educational progress in key areas. The Panel's key 1998 reports included:

- *The 1998 National Education Goals Report*, an annual report on national and state by state progress in a number of key areas, including readiness-to-learn, student achievement, graduation, teacher preparation and others.
- *Exploring Rapid Achievement Gains in North Carolina and Texas*, which is an attempt to "get behind the numbers" to identify policies that contribute to test score gains.
- *Promising Practices: Progress Toward the Goals*, which examines more closely those states that are considered the "top performers" or the "most improved" states in eight indicator areas across the eight National Education Goals.
- *Talking About Tests: An Idea Book for State Leaders* provides recommendations on how states can improve the information parents receive about state tests, the underlying standards, and the reporting of individual student results.

Also under Governor Underwood's leadership, the Panel launched the "Lessons From the States" series at its first national, interactive video teleconference, a forum for Panel members and education leaders from across the country. Over 90 registered downlink sites tuned into this national event.

At home in West Virginia, Governor Underwood has emphasized technology in the classroom, the needs of at-risk students and accountability for school performance. During the 1997-98 school year, the Jobs for West Virginia's Graduates Program reached more than 1,000 high school seniors at risk of dropping out of school. Through his SUCCESS (Student Utilization of Computers in Curriculum for the Enhancement of Scholastic Skills) initiative, the state has purchased 7,841 computer workstations and trained more than 2,300 teachers.

Governor Patton comes to the NEGP during a time of pivotal discussions about the future of the National Education Goals and the process for reporting progress toward meeting them. The Panel recently commissioned reports on a variety of education issues that have gained public visibility over the 1990s. The issues range from early childhood readiness-for-school, to the progression of the standards movement, to the use of state and national assessments to benchmark U.S. performance to that of other countries. Copies of the reports may be obtained by contacting Emily Wurtz at (202) 724-0015.

For additional information about Governor Patton and Kentucky's educational initiatives, please contact Melissa Forsythe at (502) 564-2611. For information about Governor Underwood, please contact Dan Page at (304) 558-2000.

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